

SOLVING THE MYSTERY OF 1908

F. P. Gay, Prairie View, Kan.—The influence that gained us votes was six or seven thoroughly posted men who were not afraid to talk and the republicans, not being able to answer their arguments, were kept on the defensive. A good many votes were lost because of fear of a business panic; this fear was strengthened by a swarm of traveling men who made it a point to see every business man in town. They received a hot reception here and were told that Russia was the place for a business man of that sort where one party was in power all the time and business was never disturbed by elections. The democratic party can never elect a president until it has the loyal support of at least half of the newspapers of the country. During the campaign I had here samples of county and village papers from different sections of the country, and it was all Taft, Taft, Taft! Taft would have been elected if running for king. The most dangerous foes of liberty are capital, business and venal press, just as in 1776.

L. J. Mason, Kansas City, Kan.—As the same temptations, the same fears, and the same leadings of truth come to all, by watching our own mental operations we can know something of the mental workings of others. There is no man so depraved but that he can feel the leadings of truth, and no mortal man so good but that he has the temptation to err, and whether he goes right or wrong depends upon the weight he gives to truth or error. To overcome error in the life of the nation, as well as in the life of the individual takes a struggle, a re-adjustment; requires courage, a trip through the Red sea and the wilderness in order to reach the promised land. Evil will offer rewards to its servants and it takes conviction and strength to say "Get behind me Satan." I do not believe there is anyone who as a matter of principle would not agree that equal rights to all mankind are better than special privileges, and if the conscience of men were voted wrong would not be perpetuated. But working against every advancement of the nation are three elements of human character—prejudice, avarice and fear. Prejudice does not think; does not study principles; does not get down to the issues of today, but votes preconceived irrelevant notions of the past. Avarice feeds on special privilege and looks to the maintenance of evil for its support. But the greatest campaign orator of special privilege is fear. Fear says that special privilege is responsible for all good things, threatens the manufacturer with less orders, the merchants with less business, the farmer with lower prices, the laborer with less wages. Many said get behind me, Satan, but many believed fear. But prejudice, avarice and fear have no kingdom nor power; hold nothing of good for mankind. Their falsity will be detected and they will be cast out.

James Z. Quinlan, Kansas City, Kan.—I wish to give my idea as a democrat who voted for every democratic presidential candidate from Cleveland up to the present. This time I voted for Mr. Debs. First, your platform and Mr. Taft's was identical insofar as it affected the man who was looking for work. Second, if this country is so weak that a few men can stop all industries and cause thousands of people to suffer for food, then the quicker this system of government is destroyed, and out of the wreck something solid is built the better. Third, why should man cry for work and watch his children starve while our resources are still untouched, just because some one says that is not the way to run the government. Fourth and last, I have began to think that I am just as much entitled to live as J. D. Rockefeller.

O. S. Grinnell, Big Rock, Ill.—I stood in Chicago the night of election and read reports coming from democratic wards that were an astonishment to me. Bryan barely carried the First ward and in and around the stock yards Taft made so great a run that wonderment was expressed on all sides. Those precincts were dominantly Catholic which ordinarily were democratic. There is only one explanation—the Catholic vote was given to Mr. Taft. Mr. Bryan made strong inroads upon republican wards. Perhaps this may be an explanation why New York, a Catholic city, reversed its previous great democratic majorities and gave Taft 15,000 to the good. The course for reformers is to keep right on sowing the good seed. "A man must be a fool to think he can reap a crop before it

THE SCOPE OF THE INQUIRY

In its issue of November 13, The Commoner invited contributions to a symposium, having for its purpose an inquiry into the causes of the results of the 1908 election. The Commoner asked the co-operation of its readers in every section of the country, submitting these questions:

Did the democratic party make losses in your county and precinct?

If so, to what influence were such losses due?

"What course shall reformers adopt for the future?"

Can the democratic party hope ever to gain control of the federal government?

The fourth installment of this symposium is printed in this issue. It should be understood that the publication of any particular opinion does not mean that The Commoner endorses that opinion. In order that the inquiry shall be thorough it will be necessary that wide scope be given the contributors to this symposium, and these opinions are to be printed with the names of the writers.

is ripe," is an old saying but good. However, it is a question whether the democratic party will ever get control of the federal government again. There are thousands of republicans who have the utmost confidence in William Jennings Bryan and sincerely believe in the reforms and principles he has advocated, but they do not look with confidence upon his party. At the crucial moment they are afraid to break away from their political affiliations.

E. Diefendorf, Leavenworth, Kan.—In answering questions in your issue of the 13th inst. relative to the causes of the last presidential election: First, The power of money. Second, The disregard of civil service and the employees of the government, from the highest to the lowest by their votes. Third, The purchase of democratic newspapers and voters. Fourth, The government pensions. Fifth, The Catholic vote. Sixth, The foreign imperial influence. Seventh, The Jewish influence. Eighth, Influence of national banks, railroads and combines.

C. R. Pleasants, Poseyville, Ind.—We made a great fight for you in Indiana this year and our only regret is that we could not put the state in the democrat column for you. We, however, elected a fine governor, and eleven out of thirteen congressmen, and will soon elect a senator to succeed James A. Hemenway, the gentleman from this district whom we have been trying to defeat for eighteen years. We all hope that we may yet see you elected president.

R. O. Harris, Sedalia, Mo.—No doubt you were, far and away, the most popular candidate in the field, and deserved success. The result, however, so far as I am concerned, has proven the straw that broke the camel's back and paralyzed me. As to how it happened that seems very evident you were beaten in your third race by the same influence that beat you in your first and second race—and will likewise beat you again. The fact is, union labor will not vote the democratic ticket and, reinforced at elections with the negro vote, it is very plain that this country must follow in the footsteps of Mexico, Russia and Turkey.

T. J. Hughes, Ruthven, Ia.—Guaranteed banks, election of United States senators by direct vote of the people and the tariff to a revenue basis are coming. Mr. Bryan's place in history will be greater than the man who acts as president and signs the measures that Bryan's influence has forced through congress.

Frank E. Parke, McCurtain, Okla.—I am very doubtful of the ability of the democratic party to ever get control of the national government, under the name, but I do think the principles of democracy as taught by Jefferson and which are the spontaneous sentiments of every unbiased heart will yet prevail. Too much straw is yet given the children of Israel to use in making brick, when the supply is denied them they will seek Moses, and by his leadership the Pharaoh of trusts will be buried in a redder sea than was the Pharaoh of Egypt unless sane council control the principle of democracy. The advocacy of a tariff to protect all but the trusts, the instituting a system of internal improvement to give employment and wages to the

unemployed in times of money stringency and other things that may later appear for the good of the great producing part of our population all combined in a platform may lead to victory the party adopting it regardless of name. Some of the younger generations having been taught that our government is a republican form of government think when it has passed from the hands of the republican party that the enemy have it. An old fellow whom I once asked why he was a republican told me that "our government is a republic and I think it is right to be a republican."

S. T. Davis, Kansas City, Mo.—The cause of our defeat in Missouri is about as follows: The negro vote aroused by threats to disfranchise it. Also the immigration of republicans from Iowa. Hereafter reformers must adopt state and national prohibition. No hope for democracy aside from this issue. Republican money, 200,000 public officers and coercion defeated Bryan. Liquor defeated Bryan. Also white slaves (laborers) have lost the spirit of "give me liberty or give me death."

Dr. A. J. Sparks, Lansing, Ill.—By your request, why we lost: We must come to the conclusion that since the republicans are in and have been in so long, that there are more republicans in the northern states than democrats. We had to get some of them to win. We offered them patriotism, reform and liberty. The republicans offered them the dollar, good times and plenty of it. They did not take Mr. Bryan's advice but took Mr. Roosevelt's and will get it in the neck. What shall we now do? If we were right just keep right on. Shall we ever get in? Not until the democratic party reforms. I can't illustrate my meaning any better than to say I was at a political meeting in Chicago in 1897 and among the rest there was a negro who prided himself on being a democrat. He made a little speech and said: "I am a democrat. I do not expect anything and do not want anything." Some one—a democrat—just behind him whispered to some one beside him, "and you will never get anything." Now there is the point. He wanted the negro vote but was not willing to divide up, but when in he wanted it all himself.

H. W. Kimball, Neodesha, Kan.—"How did it happen?" I will give the result in this county. We have sustained losses in the last four campaigns. In 1896 Bryan carried this county by 167 majority; in 1900 lost by 350; in 1904 lost by 976; in 1908 lost by 650. All straw votes showed that Bryan would carry the county again but the voters did not vote as they talked. It would now seem impossible to register the honest sentiment of the American voter against intimidation and bribery. I believe democracy should require educational qualifications to all voters or tax paying qualifications. This would eliminate about all of the purchasable vote. Democracy could then legislate a little for the interest of the common people.

CARNEGIE ON THE WITNESS STAND

(Continued from Page 5)

and the committee has that difficulty all the time."

"Because I am no longer in steel. I have retired," Mr. Carnegie said resignedly.

Mr. Cockran asked if the decrease in the price of steel as a commodity had been accompanied by an equally steady increase in the rate of wages.

"I hardly think so," replied Mr. Carnegie. "I would not be prepared to endorse that."

Mr. Dalzell objected to Mr. Cockran's question.

"I want to ask you a question to see whether or not I understand your testimony," he said to Mr. Carnegie. "Your opinion that steel can be put on the free list is not based on any figured cost, but on broad general principles, taking into account that we do not import steel and we do export some steel, and taking into account also, the great resources of the country and the business energy of our people. As I understand you, this is your position. Now, do I state it correctly?"

"That is true," affirmed the witness. "There has been a general consensus of opinion among the steel men that the tariff was a back number; I have heard the remark—"

"I thought I understood you, and I am glad to have you confirm me," agreed Mr. Dalzell, apparently pleased with the reply.